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CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A tamping labeler for use in a labeling apparatus, comprising:
a tamping face, ~~said tamping face supported by the tamping labeler such~~ that it is movable from a retracted position to an extended tamping position, said tamping face having a base including a plurality of vacuum holes and a plurality of discrete projections projecting outwardly from said base for maintaining at least a substantial portion of a label at a stand off from said base, said projections projecting from said base and having a uniform height, said projections each extending over only a portion of said base and not completely surrounding said vacuum holes, said projections being mutually exclusive of said vacuum holes.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Previously Presented) The tamping labeler of claim 1 wherein said projections are arranged such that each hole is at least partially surrounded by at least one of said projections.
4. (Original) The tamping labeler of claim 1 wherein at least some of said projections are ridges.
5. (Currently Amended) A tamping labeler for use in a labeling apparatus, comprising:
a tamping face having a base including a plurality of vacuum holes and a plurality of projections projecting outwardly from said base for maintaining at least a substantial portion of a label at a stand off from said base, said projections being mutually exclusive of said vacuum holes, wherein ~~said~~ at least some of said projections are circular ridges.
6. (Original) The tamping labeler of claim 1 wherein at least some of said projections are domes.

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7. (Original) The tamping labeler of claim 1 further comprising flexible accordion sides for allowing said tamping labeler to extend and retract.

8. (Original) The tamping labeler of claim 7 further comprising a one-way valve for blocking said holes when a positive pressure is introduced into said tamping labeler.

9. (Original) The tamping labeler of claim 1 wherein said tamping face is textured and said projections result from the texture of said tamping face.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently Amended) A bellows for use in a labeling apparatus, comprising:

tamping means for extending and retracting said bellows; and

a tamping face connected to said ~~tamping means~~ bellows, said tamping face having a base including a plurality of vacuum holes and a plurality of projections projecting outwardly from said base, said projections each having the same height and mutually exclusive of said vacuum holes for reducing surface tension between a label held by vacuum to said tamping face when said tamping face is wet.

12. – 16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) A product labeling apparatus, comprising:

an indexing turret carrying a plurality of tamping labelers, each tamping labeler having a tamping face with a plurality of projections projecting outwardly from said tamping face for maintaining at least a substantial portion of a label at a stand off from said tamping face;

a vacuum chamber in fluid communication with each tamping labeler other than at a labeling station;

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a positive pressure chamber in fluid communication with a tamping labeler at said labeling station;

a label supply for supplying a label to a tamping face of a tamping labeler at a label supply station spaced from said labeling station, wherein said tamping face of each tamping labeler has a plurality of holes, wherein said projections are arranged such that each hole is at least partially surrounded by at least one of said projections, wherein ~~said~~ at least some of said projections are circular ridges.

18. (Original) The labeling apparatus labeler of claim 13 wherein at least some of said projections are domes.

19. (Original) The labeling apparatus of claim 14 further comprising a one-way valve for blocking said holes when a positive pressure is introduced into said tamping labeler.

20. (Original) The labeling apparatus of claim 13 wherein said tamping face is textured and said projections result from the texture of said tamping face.